

CAREER PROSPECTS IN CIA

NOTES ON A TALK GIVEN BY LYMAN B. KIRKPATRICK, INSPECTOR GENERAL,  
TO THE CLANDESTINE SERVICES REVIEW CLASS ON 3 Oct 1960

By letting the best training in CIA go begging and so denying the career officer chance for development, middle-level supervisors are contributing to the greatest weakness in Agency programs, Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, Inspector General, told the Clandestine Services Review class on 3 October 1960. The subject of Mr. Kirkpatrick's talk was "Career Prospects in CIA."

The career officer must be given a chance for development, Mr. Kirkpatrick said. The chance, though, depends on the middle-level echelon of supervisors. With too many training classes being cancelled because of few registrations, the best training often is being denied to the career officer. The responsibility is the supervisor's to see that advantage is taken of training opportunities. Mr. Dulles has been quite happy about the language-training program, for instance. Still studies led to the conclusion that the Agency is running a poor third in language training. It has fewer persons in such training than do the Department of State and the Defense Department.

In the rush to get career officers overseas, there is also a tendency for supervisors to disregard training, Mr. Kirkpatrick said. Before going overseas, career officers need language training, area training, and refresher training in operations. Because they came into the Agency when they could not be trained, too many supervisors lack an appreciation of the need for training in developing career officers. Any supervisor who does not recognize the need for training should pass the matter on up. As the Agency attitude gets tougher and tougher, the lack of appreciation for development needs through training will be reflected in fitness reports. The supervisors of career officers will then be held responsible for adequate training for field assignments.

From the point of view of career prospects, people in CIA are in a period of concern during course of possible administrative change from one political party to another, Mr. Kirkpatrick pointed out in opening his talk. What will happen? Nothing will happen immediately. That there be no change of Director of CIA is vital. It is recognized that the efficiency of the Federal Bureau of Investigation is the result of no change of director. Evidence of this recognition is Congressional action to pay J. Edgar Hoover his full salary for life.

Difference in practice may come. In advocating a joint Congressional committee on Central Intelligence or just intelligence, Senator Mansfield is not trying to get at the Agency. The issue is on constitutional control. He is seeking a better method of control to keep CIA out of the business of influencing foreign policy and at its own business. There are four subcommittees, each one of which can call the Agency at any time. A joint committee would not take over from them. The stand taken in the White House will affect the passage of the joint-committee bill.

The Agency will remain clear of political interference, Mr. Kirkpatrick forecast. In the past, it has been free from such influence. Members have been accepted into it on merit, not on Congressional recommendation. Members of Congress have confidence in the Director and confidence in his people. So long as CIA stays within its own charter, Congress will not interfere.

Some changes but not drastic or quick ones are bound to occur, Mr. Kirkpatrick said. Mr. Dulles has commented on his retirement. It will come not too many years in the future. No answer as to who will be appointed from within or without, is evident.

Career prospects will continue on the path of the past. People in the Agency and therefore the Agency itself will become more and more professional across the board. In this respect, there has been much improvement in the past few years, he said. For instance, employees have been much more carefully selected. There has not been the pressure of a Korean War, which caused too fast an expansion and inevitable mistakes. Until 1958, personnel increased slightly and then leveled off into a straight line. Increase was balanced by decrease. The future promises a gradual contraction in Agency size.

The Junior Officers Training program has been misunderstood, Mr. Kirkpatrick said. The junior officers are new waves of professionals coming into CIA year after year. The Agency is occasionally employing an expert, a specialist. In this respect, it is not static because that is death. In the estimation of the Inspector General's office, the JOT program has been successful; its recommendation is that the standards be kept high. The program has contributed to improvement in professionalism, a high standing in which is needed to engage the opposition. Training is essential to a high level of competence.

Too many JOTs, however, have been lost. Many factors affect the attrition rate. Young officers are not always set in a career. Sometimes CIA is not all they expected it to be. Some have come in with over-glamorized ideas. Mr. Kirkpatrick here said that in his early talks to JOTs he had tried to pour ice water on the glamor. Regardless of cause, though, the loss has been higher than it should be.

Organizationally the Agency has improved, he pointed out. There is still too large a headquarters. There is also too much checking and rechecking to let the case officer get ahead with his job. British counterparts are a third of CIA size. They get along by placing more responsibility on the individual officer. In this respect, CIA still has a long way to go.

Too much bureaucracy binds activities, Mr. Kirkpatrick said. Fourteen hundred standard forms in CIA is too damn many for such an unrestricted Agency. Our ray of hope lies in the fact that the largest cash awards for suggestions have gone to those getting rid of red tape. There is too much paper, and there are too many procedures for an agency with the best possible chance at simplicity.

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The Agency is under constant pressure to reduce. There is [REDACTED] X1C4a pressure, too, for reduction in the amount of official cover. CIA is not going to get bigger; on the other hand, it can become smaller with greater professionalism. There is, however, a definitely limited maximum to the amount of non-official cover. Deep cover, too, is not built overnight. It just does not work in the tour-of-duty pattern. Deep cover requires dedication on the part of the person covered and proper handling at Headquarters. Headquarters has not yet acquired the right perspective. If deep cover is to be effectively established, Washington must be made less attractive. If a deep-cover operator has to get back there for recognition, the Agency has failed. It will succeed only when the greater reward is in deep cover itself. When the deep-cover operator develops a successful business of his own, it is ridiculous that he should be forced to kick back his profits to the Agency. The hope should be that he wants to stay in his deep cover and that he will be permitted to do so for the rest of his life.

In the future the career service will make stronger demands, Mr. Kirkpatrick said. It is moving ahead in such matters as health insurance and in getting all possible medical and educational benefits. In fact, Agency fringe benefits are as good as those in industry. The Agency will never be able to match salaries in industry. Mr. Dulles, however, is going to give employees all he can under the law. He stands up to see that his people get all they can. A career with the Agency is an established one; the Agency is here to stay. There will be periods when the Communists will take the offensive; for them to do so is flattery for CIA. If we were not successful, Mr. Khrushchev would not be quite so strenuous in trying to get us out of the way. Once again the whole basis of CIA success is professionalism. So long as its people do their job, they need not have qualms about career progress.

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